

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY SANTO DOMINGO

INFO ALL AMERICAN REPUBLIC DIPLOMATIC POSTS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PORG, PINT, DR, OAS

SUBJECT: OAS OBSERVERS' REPORT ON DOMINICAN ELECTIONS

REF: STATE 127460

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

1. FOLLOWING IS UNOFFICIAL TRANSLATION OF REPORT TO THE
CHAIRMAN OF THE PERMANENT COUNCIL OF THE OAS BY THE THREE
OAS OBSERVERS OF THE DOMINICAN ELECTIONS: EX-PRESIDENTS
GALO PLAZA OF ECUADOR, PASTRANA OF COLOMBIA, AND MENDEZ
MONTENEGRO OF GUATEMALA. THE THREE OBSERVERS LEFT SANTO
DOMINGO THIS MORNING MAY 19. THEIR REPORT (IN SPANISH)
WAS RELEASED BY THE OAS THIS AFTERNOON AT 3:00PM.

2. QUOTE DEAR MR. PRESIDENT: IT WAS A PRIVILEGE FOR US
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TO BE PRESENT IN THE FINAL STAGE OF THE ELECTORAL PROCESS
IN THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC AND AT THE BALLOTTING ITSELF FOR
THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PRESIDENTIAL SUCCESSION AND COM-
POSITION OF THE PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES FOR THE YEARS 1978-82.
THROUGH THE CONTACTS ESTABLISHED, THE VARIETY OF INFORMA-
TION RECEIVED, AND THE NEWS APPEARING IN A PLURALISTIC AND
FREE PRESS, WE WERE ABLE TO ESTABLISH THAT THE DEMOCRATIC

COMPETITION WENT FORWARD INTENSELY THROUGHOUT THE THREE MONTHS DURING WHICH THE RIGHT OF ASSEMBLY WAS AUTHORIZED BY LAW AND THAT THE CANDIDATES OF THE VARIOUS PARTIES WERE ABLE TO VISIT THE PROVINCES OF THE COUNTRY WITHOUT UNDUE OFFICIAL INTERFERENCE. NOTWITHSTANDING THE ENTHUSIASM OF THE FOLLOWERS OF THE VARIOUS POLITICAL FACTIONS, UNFORTUNATE INCIDENTS WERE VERY FEW.

3. WE HAD THE OPPORTUNITY OF SPEAKING AT LENGTH WITH MANUEL JOAQUIN CASTILLO, CHAIRMAN, OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, AND WITH HIS ADVISERS. AFTER EXCHANGING VIEWS ON THE NATIONAL ELECTORAL LAW PRESENTLY IN FORCE AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION MACHINERY IT WAS OUR IMPRESSION THAT IT WOULD BE VERY DIFFICULT INDEED TO COMMIT FRAUD IN ORDER TO MODIFY THE AUTHENTIC RESULTS OF THE VOTING. INDEED IT WOULD SEEM THAT THOSE RESPONSIBLE FOR OBSERVING THE ELECTIONS ARE INSOFAR AS POSSIBLE MEMBERS OF THE MAIN PARTIES. IN ANY CASE, EACH POLITICAL PARTY PARTICIPATING IN THE ELECTION HAS THE RIGHT TO NAME ONE DELEGATE TO EACH OF THE OBSERVER PANELS IN ORDER TO ASSIST IN INSURING THE HONESTY OF THE ELECTION. WE WERE ABLE TO ATTEST TO THEIR PRESENCE DURING THE ELECTIONS LAST TUESDAY.

4. THE FACT THAT 13 DIFFERENT POLITICAL GROUPINGS WERE REGISTERED TO PARTICIPATE IN THE ELECTION IS A REFLECTION

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OF THE VARIED MANIFESTATIONS OF DOMINICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT AND A DEMONSTRATION OF THE BOARD TOLERANCE SHOWN AS THE ELECTIONS PROGRESSSED. THUS, THE VOTER WAS IN A POSITION TO SELECT THE CANDIDATE REFLECTING HIS OWN SPIRITUAL AFFINITIES OR HIS THOUGHTS REGARDING PLATFORM OR PROGRAMS.

5. WE SPOKE TO THE CANDIDATES FOR THE PRESIDENCY OF THE REPUBLIC WHO GAVE US THEIR CANDID IMPRESSIONS ON THE WAY THE ELECTORAL CONTEST WAS BEING CARRIED OUT AND WE HELD A CORDIAL DIALOGUE WITH PRESIDENT JOAQUIN BALAGUER IN THE PRESIDENTIAL PALACE ITSELF. ON ELECTION DAY WE VISITED NUMEROUS VOTING PLACES IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND THEN WE TRAVELED TO OTHER CITIES IN THE COUNTRY FOR THE SAME PURPOSE. FOR THIS REASON WE ARE ABLE TO BEAR DIRECT WITNESS TO A PEOPLE DECIDING ITS OWN DESTINY IN CIVILIZED HARMONY AND ORDER. THE POLICE, PLACED UNDER THE SUPERVISION OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, ACTED WITH DISCRETION TO GUARANTEE THE CONDUCT OF THE ELECTION. THE HIGH VOTER PARTICIPATION IS THE MOST ELOQUENT PROOF OF THE WILL OF THE CITIZENS OF THE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC TO DETERMINE THE FUTURE OF THEIR NATION. AS OBSERVERS DESIGNATED

IN OUR PERSONAL CAPACITIES BY THE COUNCIL OF THE OAS ON
THE REQUEST OF THE DOMINICAN GOVERNMENT ITSELF, FOR US IT
WAS A VERY HIGH HONOR AND A SOURCE OF SPECIAL PLEASURE

TO HAVE WITNESSED THIS EXEMPLARY CIVIC EVENT WHICH
ENABLES THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE AND WHICH IS ONE MORE
STEP IN THE STRUGGLE OF LATIN AMERICA FOR THE CONQUEST
AND CONSOLIDATION 88 DEMOCRATIC VALUES.

6. HAVING COMPLETED THIS REPORT WHICH COVERED THE TERMS
OF REFERENCE OF OUR MISSION, ON WEDNESDAY MORNING WE
LEARNED OF THE SUDDEN SUSPENSION OF THE COUNTING OF
BALLOTS EARLY IN THE MORNING BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL
BOARD. WE TRIED WITHOUT SUCCESS TO REACH THE CENTRAL
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ELECTORAL BOARD BY TELEPHONE IN ORDER TO FIND OUT WHY.
LIKEWISE WE URGENTLY REQUESTED AN AUDIENCE WITH THE
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC, DR. JOAQUIN BALAGUER WHO
RECEIVED US IN HIS OFFICE AT ONE O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

7. WE EXPRESSED OUR CONCERN TO THE CHIEF OF STATE OWING
TO THE ABOVE-MENTIONED SUSPENSION OF THE BALLOT-COUNTING
PROCESS AND TO THE RUMORS CIRCULATING IN THE CITY AND
EVEN ABROAD IN REGARD TO THE ACTIONS OF THE AUTHORITIES.
THE PRESIDENT CATEGORICALLY STATED TO US THAT HE WOULD
BE THE FIRST TO REJECT ANY COUP D'ETAT AND TO OPPOSE ANY
BREAKDOWN IN THE ORDER OF LAW. WE REMINDED HIM THAT OUR
PRESENCE AS OBSERVERS ON THE INVITATION OF HIS GOVERNMENT
THROUGH THE COUNCIL OF THE ORGANIZATION OF AMERICAN STATES
MADE US TOO INTO UNDERWRITERS OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S
ATTITUDE IN DEFENSE OF THE RESPECT OF THE EXPRESSED TRUTH
OF THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE. THE PRESIDENT TOLD US THAT IT
WAS ONLY IN THE MORNING THAT HE HAD LEARNED OF THE
INTERRUPTION IN COUNTING OF THE ELECTORAL RESULTS AND THAT
THIS HAD BEEN DUE TO THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE CHAIRMAN
OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD, MR. CASTILLO WHOSE WHERE-
ABOUTS WERE UNKNOWN. HE ADDED THAT HE INTENDED TO TRY TO
LOCATE HIM AS SOON AS POSSIBLE OR TO CONVOKE EITHER THE
MEMBERS OF THE BOARD OR THEIR ALTERNATES. HE REPEATED
THAT THIS WOULD BE NECESSARY IN ORDER FOR THE COUNTING
TO PROCEED TO COMPLETION. TO OUR RESPECTFUL SUGGESTION
THAT IT WAS NECESSARY TO TELL THE DOMINICAN PEOPLE WHAT
HE HAD TOLD US, HE REPLIED THAT THE COMMUNICATION MEDIA
WERE ALSO UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL
BOARD.

8. AS WE WERE PREPARING TO RETURN TO OUR COUNTRIES UPON
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COMPLETION OF THE MISSION ENTRUSTED TO US, WE RECEIVED A MESSAGE FROM PRESIDENT BALAGUER TOGETHER WITH A COPY OF A COMMUNIQUE ISSUED BY THE CENTRAL ELECTORAL BOARD STATING THAT THIS HIGH BODY HAD REASSUMED ITS PROPER FUNCTION, AS IT HAD BEEN INDICATED WOULD HAPPEN IN THE ABOVE-MENTIONED INTERVIEW, AND THAT CONSEQUENTLY IN THE

WORDS OF THE PRESIDENT, "THE ELECTORAL PROCESS WHICH A FEW HOURS AGO WAS INTERRUPTED FOR REASONS BEYOND THE CONTROL BOTH OF THE MEMBERS OF THE BOARD AND GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS, HAS NOW RETURNED TO NORMAL." IN VIEW OF THE PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT WE SPOKE AGAIN TODAY (THURSDAY) WITH MR. CASTILLO WHO RECEIVED US WITH THE OTHER TWO MEMBERS OF THE ELECTORAL BOARD. HE CONFIRMED THAT THE COUNTING OF THE VOTES IN THE MUNICIPALITIES HAD FORMALLY BEGUN. WHEN WE ASKED IF THE CITIZENS WOULD CONTINUE RECEIVING PERIODIC RESULTS HE SURPRISED US BY STATING THAT ONLY THE FINAL NATIONAL RESULTS WOULD BE ISSUED AND THAT, IN ADDITION, THE ELECTORAL LAW PROVIDED FOR UP TO 30 DAYS FOR THIS PURPOSE COUNTING FROM ELECTION DAY.

9. WE ALSO ASKED IF THE COUNTING HAD BEGUN AGAIN IN THE CAPITAL CITY AND UPON RECEIVING A POSITIVE REPLY WE DEEMED IT APPROPRIATE TO GO TO THE CONGRESSIONAL PALACE WHERE THE LOCAL ELECTORAL BOARD IS PRESENTLY FUNCTIONING AND WHICH WAS MEETING IN THE PRESENCE OF WITNESSES FROM THE POLITICAL PARTIES. ITS MEMBERS INFORMED US THAT LOW-RANKING MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY FORCES HAD FORCED THEM TO LEAVE THE PREMISES A FEW HOURS BEFORE BUT THAT SOON OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY HAD OFFERED THEM GUARANTEES. IT IS POSSIBLE THAT THERE HAD BEEN AN ERRONEOUS INTERPRETATION OF ORDERS FROM ABOVE. WE CANNOT CONCLUDE THIS REPORT WITHOUT MENTIONING OUR DEEP CONCERN FOR THE VEIL OF SILENCE PRESENTLY COVERING THE ELECTORAL RESULTS. IT HAS PROPERLY BEEN SAID THAT ACCESS TO INFORMATION IS A

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SACRED CIVIC RIGHT AND EVEN MORE SO WHEN SUCH INFORMATION CONCERNs THE MOST TRANSCENDENTAL ACT IN ANY DEMOCRACY, THAT WHICH DEFINES THE DESTINY OF A NATION.

10. IN THIS SITUATION OF OBVIOUS CONFUSION IN THE LIFE OF THE NOBLE DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, WE REMAIN CONFIDENT THAT THE LOYALTY WHICH PRESIDENT BALAGUER HAS SHOWN FOR

DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES DURING THE LONG YEARS OF HIS
PRESIDENCY WILL ALLOW HIM TO DISSIPATE THE DOUBTS WHOSE
SHADOWS NOW DARKEN THE INSTITUTIONS OF HIS COUNTRY. VANCE

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